

SPRAYERS FITTED WITH WEED-IT QUADRO SENSORS SCORE WINS AT FIELD DAYS ACROSS AUSTRALIA

Farmers are investing in new spray equipment in a bid to reduce their inputs as production costs sit at eye-watering levels.

For Australian manufacturers like Calibre Spraying, this means continuing to develop products that best suit farmers' needs.

The business is based at Brookton, Western Australia, and received plenty of interest at the Dowerin GWN7 machinery field days.

Calibre Spraying director Daniel Watkins said he and Calibre Spraying R&D manager Scott Morrell were "driven by innovation for farmers".

Mr Watkins said they spent three years researching and developing a boom design to create the product from the ground up.

"We've had an extremely successful start, selling 15 machines in our first 12 months of business, which is incredibly humbling," he said.

In 2021 the pair won best new release at the Dowerin GWN7 machinery field days and Newdegate machinery field days.

They backed up those victories with another best new release win at Dowerin last week with the Calibre Quadro trailing sprayer.

The 10,000 litre sprayer has a 36.5 metre boom that has been fitted with Weed-It Quadro near-infrared sensors.

Mr Watkins said the Calibre Quadro was the only structured boom manufactured in WA.

"For WA farmers, a boom spray is a very critical part of equipment for their farms so it's a very big thing for them to have a manufacturer in WA," he said.

"We have a lot of new technology that wasn't previously offered and now with the Calibre Quadro model, it's something that hasn't been seen before with the principle we've done with the Weed-It system."



Calibre Spraying director Daniel Watkins, Calibre Spraying R&D manager Scott Morrell and Rometron Australia managing director Brendan Williams with the Calibre Quadro trailing boom spray.

Rometron Australia managing director Brendan Williams struck up a conversation with the innovator behind Weed-It, Roel de Jonge, back in 2008 and went on to become the Australian distributor of the technology.

"In 2008 the Olympics was in Beijing and that's when Roundup went to \$12/litre, like it is now," he said.

"We had a heightened sense of finding something that would target weeds, rather than blanket spray them."

"One thing led to another and Roel got very excited because we wanted a 27m wide Weed-It when he'd normally be dealing with a 2m wide Weed-It for spraying pavements."

The latest Weed-It model on the market is the Quadro, which Mr Williams said is easier to fit than its predecessors.

"Previously we had five nozzles per sensor, now we've got four nozzles per sensor, hence the Quadro name and each sensor is spaced at a metre," he said.

"So that means the nozzle spacings at 250mm fit into normal spraying operations, so it's a little easier to retrofit."

Mr Williams said the Calibre team had "really nailed" the design of the Quadro.

"We're literally making hundreds of sprayers with Weed-It in the east and I've got to say, this is one of the best looking ones I've come across," he said.

It is the second sprayer fitted with Weed-It technology in as many weeks to win an award.

The AGT Weed-It Chaser MKII spot sprayer, manufactured by Agtronics in Goondiwindi, Qld, was named best Australian agricultural machine at the Eyre Peninsula field days in South Australia.

Mr Williams said for customers using the technology well and spraying when weeds were small, it had proven to be "a hell of a saving".

"Last week we were talking to a client who was saving \$100,000 a year in Roundup," he said.

"This year he's saving \$300,000 because the Roundup price is three times as much.

"Of all the machinery I've ever been associated with, the payback for this technology is way and above what most people expect."